

Francesco Gardani

Scientific Report

1. Purpose of the visit

The main purpose of the stay at the University of Zurich was to work on a project *Animacy and its reflexes in grammar—Italo-Romance*, aimed at the study of the effects of animacy on the grammar of some varieties of Italo-Romance.

Animacy is an extra-linguistic conceptual property which primarily distinguishes between animate and inanimate entities and which has been shown to trigger structural distinctions in the grammar of languages, cross-linguistically (Comrie 1989: 185). Starting from Silverstein (1976), linguists have been recognizing the fundamental role that animacy plays in grammar and elaborating universal scales of animacy relating to the grammatical elements of language. For example, by conflating parameters already proposed in previous literature, Viti (2008: 55) suggests the following decreasing hierarchy: first/second person pronouns > third person pronouns > proper names > kin terms > human common nouns > non-human animate common nouns > inanimate, countable common nouns > mass nouns.

Since Comrie's (1989[1982]: 185–200) pioneering work on animacy, considerable interest in the topic has arisen and a number of studies have been devoted to sub-topics, such as case (see, e.g., Creissels & Mounole 2011) and number (e.g., Smith-Stark 1974), in morphosyntax; Differential Object Marking (see, especially, Bossong 1985), word order (e.g., Branigan et al. 2008), argument structure (e.g., Aranovich 2009), reflexives and referential expressions (e.g., Lødrup 2009) and beneficiary constructions (e.g., Zúñiga 2011), in syntax. Some have gone so far as to claim that “animacy is the most fundamental distinction in classifying individuals in natural language” (Ortmann 1998: § 3.6). Nevertheless, a comprehensive study of the effects of animacy on grammar has not been carried out so far. The present project is intended as a first step in the direction; more specifically, as an investigation into the effects of animacy in the morphosyntax and syntax of the Italo-Romance varieties.

The concrete purpose of the stay in Zurich was to have access to the extensive collections of the libraries in Zurich (Romanisches Seminar, Forschungsbibliothek Jakob Jud, Zentralbibliothek Zürich) and to initiate a collaboration on this topic with Michele Loporcaro, the leading expert in Italo-Romance dialectology and linguistics.

2. Description of the work carried out during the visit

The work I carried out during my stay at Zurich University included the following three steps: (a) searching literature on animacy in general and on animacy-controlled phenomena in Italo-Romance varieties; (b) reading the literature found; and (c) discussing the results.

In order to find data on animacy-controlled phenomena in Italo-Romance varieties, I browsed all issues of three journals fundamental to (Italo-)Romance linguistics and philology, viz. *Archivio Glottologico Italiano* (since 1873); *L'Italia Dialettale* (since 1924); and *Revue de Linguistique Romane* (since 1925). Parallel to this, I conducted a more general search, beyond the realm of the Romance languages. As a result, I collected and read part of the following relevant publications, grouped according to the languages (or language groups) they are concerned with (in addition to these, see the references in ‘3. Description of the main results obtained’).

a) Italo-Romance:

Egerland, Verner & Anna Cardinaletti. 2010. I pronomi personali e riflessivi. In Giampaolo Salvi & Lorenzo Renzi (eds.), *Grammatica dell'italiano antico*, 411–467. Bologna: Il mulino.

- Faraoni, Vincenzo. 2014. La formazione del plurale italo-romanzo nella documentazione notarile altomedievale. In Piera Molinelli, Pierluigi Cuzzolin & Chiara Fedriani (eds.), *Latin Vulgaire - Latin Tardif X. Actes du Xe colloque international sur le latin vulgaire et tardif Bergamo, 5-9 septembre 2012*, 99–117. Bergamo: Bergamo University Press.
- Fiorentino, Giuliana. 1999. Clausole relative romanze tra innovazione e conservazione. *Revue Romane* 34(1). 25–60.
- La Fauci, Nunzio. 1988. *Oggetti e soggetti nella formazione della morfosintassi romanza* (Nuova Collana di Linguistica 7). Pisa: Giardini.
- La Fauci, Nunzio. 1997. *Per una teoria grammaticale del mutamento morfosintattico: Dal latino verso il romanzo* (Progetti Linguistici 6). Pisa: ETS.
- Loporcaro, Michele. 2002. Il pronome loro nell'Italia centro-meridionale e la storia del sistema pronominale romanzo. *Vox Romanica* 61. 48–116.
- Parry, Mair. 2010. Non-canonical subjects in the Early Italian vernaculars. *Archivio Glottologico Italiano* 95(2). 190–226.
- Romagno, Domenica. 2005. La codificazione degli attanti nel Mediterraneo romanzo: Accordo del participio e marcatura dell'oggetto. *Archivio Glottologico Italiano* 90(1). 90–113.
- Romagno, Domenica. 2011. Codifica argomentale e ruoli semantici: ergativo/accusativo vs. attivo. *Archivio Glottologico Italiano* 96(1). 3–30.
- Rovai, Francesco. 2005. L'estensione dell'accusativo in latino tardo e medievale. *Archivio Glottologico Italiano* 90. 54–89.
- Rovai, Francesco. 2007. Manifestazioni di sub-sistemi tipologici attivi in latino. *Archivio Glottologico Italiano* 92. 51–64.
- Rovai, Francesco. 2014. Case marking in absolute constructions: Further evidence for a semantically based alignment in Late Latin. *Journal of Latin Linguistics* 13(1). 115–143.
- Zamboni. 2002. Sistemi casuali e orientamenti tipologici. *Quaderni dell'Istituto di Fonetica e Dialettologia* 4. 190–237.
- b) Romance:
- Hill, Virginia. 2013. The Direct Object Marker in Romanian: A historical perspective. *Australian Journal of Linguistics* 33(2). 140–151.
- Pensado, Carmen. 1986. Inversion de marquage et perte du système casuel en ancien français. *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie* 102(3-4). 271–296.
- Sobolev, Andrej N. 2008. On some Aromanian grammatical patterns in Balkan Slavonic dialects. In Biljana Sikimić & Tijana Ašić (eds.), *The Romance Balkans: Collection of papers presented at the international conference The Romance Balkans, 4–6 November 2006*, 113–121. Belgrade: Institute for Balkan Studies.
- Wust, Valerie A. 2009. *A la recherche des clitiques perdus*: The dictogloss as a measure of the comprehension of *y* and *en* by L2 learners of French. *Canadian Modern Language Review / La Revue canadienne des langues vivantes* 65(3). 471–499.
- Zabalegui, Nerea. 2008. La posición de los pronombres átonos en construcciones con verbos no conjugados en el español actual de Caracas. *Akademios* 10(2). 83–107.
- c) Beyond Romance:
- Becker, Misha K. 2014. *The acquisition of syntactic structure: Animacy and thematic alignment* (Cambridge Studies in Linguistics 141). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bril, Isabelle. 2010. Coordination inclusive et comitative dans les langues océaniques. In Franck Floricic (ed.), *Essais de typologie et de linguistique générale: Mélanges offerts à Denis Creissels*, 361–382. Lyon: ENS éditions.
- Colaclides, Peter. 1964. The pattern of gender in Modern Greek. *Linguistics* 2(5). 65–68.

- Contini-Morava, Ellen. 2008. Human relationship terms, discourse prominence, and asymmetrical animacy in Swahili. *Journal of African Languages and Linguistics* 29(2). 127–171.
- Donati, Margherita. 2009. *La categoria del vocativo nelle lingue classiche: aspetti teorici, diacronici e tipologici*. Roma: Università degli studi Roma Tre PhD dissertation.
- Foley, William. 2005. Semantic parameters and the unaccusative split in the Austronesian language family. *Studies in Language* 29(2). 385–430.
- Galofaro, Francesco. 2014. Animatezza e soggettività nella lingua. *Actes Sémiotiques* 117. 1–18.
- Hundt, Marianne. 1999. Animacy, agentivity, and the spread of the progressive in Modern English. *English Language and Linguistics* 8(1). 47–69.
- Hundt, Marianne & Benedikt Szmrecsanyi. 2012. Animacy in early New Zealand English. *English World-Wide* 33(3). 241–263.
- Hjelmslev, Louis. 1956. Animé et inanimé, personnel et non-personnel. *Travaux de l'Institut de Linguistique* 1. 155–199.
- Lazzeroni, Romano. 2003. Il nome greco del sogno e il neutro indoeuropeo. *Studi Linguistici e Filologici Online* 1. 299–326.
- Lemaréchal, Alain. 1993. Pluriel, animéité et référentialité en palau. *Faits de Langues* 1(2). 169–177.
- During the last days of my visit, I discussed part of the results of my research with Michele Loporcaro.

3. Description of the main results obtained

The main results of the research I carried out in Zurich on animacy-controlled phenomena in Italo-Romance can be classified according to the areas of grammar onto which animacy impacts, viz. (a) syntax and (b) morphosyntax. The effects of animacy are manifest not only in synchronic distributions but also in the evolution of language. For this reason, data from Latin are covered, too.

(a) Animacy-controlled phenomena in SYNTAX:

Latin had an alignment system of the type nominative/accusative which evolved into an active/inactive system (La Fauci 1988: 43; Rovai 2012: 106). In an alignment system of that kind, it is not the grammatical relation among the arguments ('actants'), but the semantic macroroles, Actor vs. Undergoer, that is decisive (Rovai 2007: 52). Thus, active transitive subjects and active intransitive subjects have an 'active' coding, whereas inactive subjects and direct objects of transitive verbs have an 'inactive' coding. In these terms, the semantic basis of this shift from a nominative/accusative system to an active/inactive system in Proto-Romance is grounded in the animacy distinction.

This evolution had repercussions on word order, too. This is not surprising, as several recent studies have stressed the role of animacy in determining word order. For example, Branigan et al. (2008: 187) find that "animate entities tend to be realized both as subjects and in early word order positions". With respect to Dutch, Vogels & van Bergen (aop-2013) show that definiteness and animacy increase the probability of preverbal subjects. In the evolution from Latin to Italo-Romance, Actor subjects become increasingly preverbal, while Undergoer subjects become increasingly postverbal (Parry 2010: 213). Moreover, the Italo-Romance varieties with finite verb–subject agreement, topical and Actor [...] subjects normally trigger number agreement on the verb, whereas non-topical and Undergoer subjects do not necessarily do so" (Parry 2010: 202).

A further effect of animacy is the introduction, in Sicilian, of a transparent marker of objecthood, the preposition *a*, for objects high on the animacy (and definiteness) scale (La Fauci

1991: 387). In fact, Iemmolo (2010: 256–257) takes a more nuanced stance and shows that, in Old Sicilian, Differential Object Marking is triggered firstly by topicality and secondly by animacy/definiteness, while in Modern Sicilian, it is mainly triggered by humanness along with definiteness/referentiality.

A further area of syntax affected by animacy is the coding of source, location, and directions. With respect to the expressions of location and direction, Latin uses different prepositions depending ultimately on an animacy-based distinction. As Luraghi (2011) shows, in Latin, location and direction relative to human landmarks are coded in terms of a distinction between spatial coincidence (*in*) vs. non-coincidence (*apud/ad*) of trajector (Figure) and landmark (Ground). When the trajector and the landmark coincide in space, i.e., with inanimate landmarks, the preposition *in* is used, governing ablative for location (1) and accusative for direction; when there is no spatial coincidence between the trajector and the landmark, i.e., commonly, with human landmarks, *apud* (mostly locational) (2) and *ad* (mostly directional) are used. (Examples are taken from Luraghi 2011: 213, 215.)

(1) (Caesar *De Bello Gallico* 2.1)
cum esset Caesar in citeriore Gallia
 while was Caesar in Hither.abl Gaul.abl
 ‘While Caesar was in Hither Gaul [...]’

(2) (Catullus *Carmen* 13.1)
cenabis bene, mi Fabulle, apud me
 you.will.dine well my Fabullus by me
 ‘You will dine well at my place, my Fabullus.’

This opposition is not continued in the most Romance languages, and location and direction with human landmarks are coded through a variety of strategies. For example, in Italian the use of the prepositions *a* (< Lat. *ad*) and *in* is lexically determined and is subject to regional variation.

Regarding expressions of source, Latin uses three prepositions, *ex*, *de*, and *ab*; with city names, names of small islands, and, sporadically, names of countries, the plain ablative is used, instead (Luraghi 2010: 32). With respect to animacy, Latin seems to limit the use of *de*+abl to inanimates (Eckhoff et al. 2013: 338), as in (3), whereas *ab* mostly codes source with human referents (Luraghi 2010: 35), as in (4).

(3) (Matthew 27:53)
et exeuntes de monumentis post resurrectionem
 ‘and they came out of the tombs’

(4) (Cicero *In Verrem* II.5.146)
eos sertorianos milites [...] a Dianio fugere dicebat
 ‘he used to say that soldiers of Sertorius were fleeing from Dianium’

In Old Italian, *da*, from Latin *de+ab*, codes location on the side of an inanimate landmark, whereas, with human landmarks, *appo* is used. The following examples, from Luraghi (2011: 222), illustrate.

(5) (Boccaccio *Decameron* 1.3)
Ordinò che colui de’ suoi figliuoli appo il quale

he.ordered that the.one of+the his children by which
fosse questo anello trovato...
 were this ring found
 ‘He ordered that the one among his children, at whose place this ring would be found,
 [...]’

- (6) (Dante *Inferno* 2.117)
E venni a te così com’ ella volse.
 and I.came to you so as she wished
 ‘And I came to you so as she wished.’

In Modern Italian, the preposition *da* has a variety of uses: with human landmarks, it codes both location and direction (7); with inanimate landmarks, it codes source (8) (Luraghi 2011: 220).

- (7) *sono andato dal dottore*
 ‘I went to the doctor.’
- (8) *i bambini stanno tornando da scuola*
 ‘The children are coming back from school.’

(b) Animacy-controlled phenomena in MORPHOSYNTAX:

The development of the plural formative *-i* in Italian from Late Latin is a case in point. As Maiden (2000: 168) and Faraoni (2010: 74) have recently demonstrated, in early Italo-Romance the inflectional class *libro libri* had a bicasual system with two plural formatives *-i* and *-os*, that can be explained by recourse to a syntactic alignment of the type ‘active/inactive’. As Faraoni (2010: 69, 71, 73–74, 75) shows, highly agentive nouns, which are unmarked in subject position, continue the Latin nominative plural forms (e.g. AMICI > *amici*). All remaining nouns, unmarked in an object position, continue the accusative sigmatic plural forms (e.g. FOCOS > **focoj* > *foco*), but have borrowed the formative *-i*, once the formative *-o*, from Latin *-OS*, was no longer able to express the value opposition of singular vs. plural through the forms *foco*(sg) and **foco*(pl). Also novel work on Old Italian conducted on Latin and Old Italian (Gardani 2013) has shown that the emergence of new inflectional classes is mostly based on re-interpreting the extra-morphological property of animacy and coupling it with a specific set of inflectional formatives, as is the case for the emergence of the inflectional class *poeta poeti*.

Another source of evidence of the effects of animacy-based properties on morphosyntax comes from the analysis of clitics in Italo-Romance varieties. A case in point is the study of the object clitics paradigms of some northern Italian varieties spoken in the Comelico area (Veneto) (Paoli 2009). The analysis involves the features of person and case. With respect to person, Paoli’s data support the crosslinguistic observation that opposition between first person and third person is fundamentally animacy-based, as it shows that third person clitics, as more frequently referring to inanimate referents than first person clitics, are more subject to erosion (Paoli 2009: 81). With respect to case, while dative forms are not sensitive to animacy, accusative clitics are (Paoli 2009: 71). The examples in (9) and (10) show that 3sg and 3pl accusative forms can only be used with animate referents (Paoli 2009: 64).

- (9) A: *As-t vist Rosa?*
 ‘Have you seen Rosa?’

B: *Si, ø ei vistu ngeri / l'ei vista ngeri.*
'Yes, I saw her yesterday.'

(10) *A Giuani piasi al lati e ø / *lu beve ogni dì.*
'Giuani likes milk and drinks it every day.'

4. Future collaboration with host institution (if applicable);
Further collaboration with Michele Loporcaro and the institutes of General Linguistics and Romance Linguistics of the University of Zurich, is aimed to prepare a proposal to be submitted for a larger project on animacy.

5. Projected publications / articles resulting or to result from the grant (ESF must be acknowledged in publications resulting from the grantee's work in relation with the grant);
A journal article provisional titled "Animacy and its reflexes in Italo-Romance".

6. Other comments (if any).
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